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## Editorial issue 10:2

This year marks a special anniversary as it is our tenth and so, perhaps, it is timely to take stock on the development of comics studies as a field. When the journal was first published there were few consistent outlets for comics scholars to publish. Scholars published either in sociology, English, history or art history journals. Naturally it was difficult to collect materials from these disparate sources. 5

Comics scholarship has come a long way since then with at least five journals now devoted to comics scholarship. There are international conferences practically every month, book series from the main academic publishers devoted to comics covering areas as disparate as gender, medicine and world studies. Comics study and practice is becoming ever popular in further and higher education as both teaching tool, research method and source of study. 10

The articles in this issue attest to the wide application and potential of comics scholarship in their diverse methodologies and the range of topics from images of the Holocaust, readership theory and the use of practice as a form of therapy. 15

In 'Drawing Vladek, Staging Shylock: Art Spiegelman's Maus in American Holocaust Discourse' Philip Smith reflects on how the complexities of Shylock's character, as a Jewish moneylender in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, inspire Art Spiegelman to counter the hero/saint stereotype used to depict victims of the Holocaust and present a more nuanced character. 20

Catherine Clark and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson's article is based on the Marvel comics and television series *The Runaways*. In "'Oh, My God! I CAN FLY!': Female Agency in Marvel's Runaways – representing female agency' they analyse female agency through a range of concepts such as intentionality, power and rationality to identify the 'power' of the characters. 25

Attachment theory is used in Francisco Saez de Adana's article, 'Attachment and grief: The case of the death of Raven Sherman' in which reader's grief over the death of Raven Sherman in the Milton Caniff classic comic strip, *Terry and the Pirates* is analysed from the letters in the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum. The writer argues that death has lost its sting not only because comics as a medium has been superseded by later mass media but by its overuse in superhero comics in particular. 30

Like Saez de Adana, Lauren O'Connor reflects on differences between past and present attitudes to comics content. In 'Inseparation of Powers: DC Comics, Flex Mentallo, and the Necessity of Adolescence' O'Connor discusses how earlier comics narratives dwelt on certain youthful qualities such as chaos, fluidity and play in superhero comics. Later superhero comics discarded these qualities but in doing so placed the superhero genre at risk. 35

'Company, Counterbalance, and Closure in Ellen Forney's *Marbles* – connections between lived experience and reception attraction of comics' conversely examines how, through imagery and narrative qualities of comics of Ellen Forney. In this article, Jodi 40

Cressman examines how Forney's account of her bi-polar illness attempts to create understandings of the condition.

There follows an interview by Jeffery Klaehn with comic book writer Jeff Parker whose writing credits include *Wonder Woman*, *X-Men: First Class*, *Batman '66* and *The Hulk*. The issue finishes with book reviews on *5 Worlds Book 1: The Sand Warrior* by Owen Heitmann, Lauren Seal's review of *Mechademia 10: World Renewal* and Valentino Zullo's review of Christopher Pizzino's *Arresting Development: Comics at the Boundaries of Literature*.

We hope you enjoy this issue and here's to the next ten years.

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